

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

June 5, 1976

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Members of the Cabinet Committee
to Combat Terrorism

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger, Chairman

SUBJECT: "Intermediate" Terrorism

There is a heightened risk of terrorist activity this year in this country centering on the Bicentennial celebrations, Montreal Olympics and Presidential campaigns. Attacks by US-based or foreign terrorist groups could take the form of the bombings and assassinations with which the world is now all too familiar. But there is also the possibility that more sophisticated weapons will be used involving a major escalation of terrorist dangers.

As you are aware, the Department of Justice is the lead agency in coping with domestic terrorism. Investigative and operational responsibility rest with the FBI. The Department of State has the lead responsibility for dealing with terrorism involving Americans abroad and for handling the foreign relations aspects of domestic terrorism incidents.

While the Justice and State Departments thus bear the primary responsibility, their success in confronting the terrorism problem is dependent upon a vigorous, well-coordinated effort by all concerned US Government agencies. I therefore wish to take this opportunity to re-emphasize our Committee's charter and to solicit your continuing cooperation in efforts to prevent and, as necessary, deal with, terrorist threats or attacks during our Bicentennial year.

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I enclose for your information a memorandum which reviews the actions which the Cabinet Committee's Working Group has undertaken to meet the possibility of heightened terrorist dangers in this country.

Enclosure:

Briefing Memorandum

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

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June 1, 1976

To: The Secretary
Thru: M - Mr. Eagleburger
From: S/CCT - Robert A. Fearey

"Intermediate" Terrorism

On May 21, 1975 the Working Group of the Cabinet Committee to Combat Terrorism established an interagency Study Group, chaired by Dr. Robert H. Kupperman, Chief Scientist, ACDA, to examine possible terrorist threats or attacks involving nuclear, chemical or biological weapons of mass destruction. The Study Group's report, submitted on September 17, 1975, effectively identified the issues involved in the USG's seeking to prevent, and if prevention failed, successfully dealing with such threats or attacks. The Cabinet Committee/Working Group concluded, on the basis of the study, that responsibility for further research and planning on the problem properly lay with the NSC. The study was accordingly submitted to the NSC Staff for appropriate action.

On January 22, 1976 the Cabinet Committee/Working Group initiated a follow-on study on "intermediate" terrorism. This was defined as a level of terrorist violence lying between mass destruction terrorism and the types of assassinations or abductions of medium-grade USG officials or private citizens with which US terrorism policy has been primarily concerned. Examples of intermediate terrorism are the use of man-portable missiles to destroy commercial aircraft, with the possible objective of bringing all commercial air service in the US to a halt; use of such missiles to assassinate a visiting head of state; blowing up of a nuclear power reactor with possible dispersion of nuclear materials; or the sabotage

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of key elements of a multi-state electric power grid. The Working Group felt that this scale of terrorism presented prevention and management problems largely distinct from those presented by possible mass destruction terrorism, on the one hand, or by terrorist assassinations and abductions of the type thus far experienced, on the other.

On April 21, 1976 the Study Group, also chaired by Dr. Kupperman, submitted its report, the highlights of which are as follows:

(a) The Bicentennial celebrations, Montreal Olympics and Presidential election campaigns present serious risk of intermediate-level terrorist incidents in the US during 1976. The many public events will provide attractive targets for terrorist groups, and the movement of terrorists into and within the country will be facilitated by the heavy visitor flow.

(b) A number of US-based militant extremist organizations, such as the Weather Underground and American Indian Movement, present a current danger of engaging in intermediate terrorist attacks. The Palestinian Rejectionists and affiliated groups such as the Japan Red Army are the most likely sources of foreign-based intermediate terrorist incidents.

(c) Measures to counter such threats and to provide as much protection as practicable for potential targets lie in the areas of intelligence, physical protection, and availability of anti-terrorism resources. Timely intelligence and the judicious use of barriers, guards, sensors, communications, and anti-terrorist materials (e.g., antitoxins) can enhance the security of targets.

(d) While much has been accomplished in these respects, further action is required, particularly to:

-- Study the present systems for collecting and disseminating intelligence on terrorism to determine if they are adequate and comply with Federal law; recommend whatever additional collection, dissemination and centralization may be necessary and appropriate

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-- Increase security at potential high-risk targets, including restricting the dissemination of sensitive installation plans and operations

-- Locate and make advance plans for the use of anti-terrorist resources, such as immunization materials and antidotes

-- Survey and present recommendations on media problems in relation to intermediate terrorism

-- Implement Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff recommendations for reducing the vulnerability of nuclear power reactor sites

-- Expedite the Federal Preparedness Agency (FPA) analysis of the vulnerability and recoverability of the US power grid from terrorist attack

-- Investigate means of strengthening controls over terrorist acquisition of automatic weapons and man-portable rocket launchers

-- Monitor or initiate R&D programs on devices or techniques for frustrating rocket attacks against civil aircraft and for deterring or thwarting other forms of intermediate terrorism attack

-- Provide funding (an estimated \$15.8 million) for anti-terrorist screening measures proposed by the Customs Service

(e) Responsibility for the management of an intermediate terrorism incident in the US should focus in the Department of Justice, with investigative and operational responsibility resting with the FBI, and with the Secretary of State responsible for international aspects. There should be adequate monitoring, command and control arrangements to permit the President to bring the full resources of the Government to the aid of the FBI, the lead agency within the Department of Justice, and to direct management of the incident personally to the

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extent he desires. (The NSC Staff is studying this problem.) The FPA should be responsible for coordinating US Government-wide, and Federal-state, emergency actions to cope with the dislocative effects of terrorist attacks.

(f) The USG's publicly declared policy should continue to be one of no concessions to groups or individuals threatening, or carrying out, terrorist threats or attacks, including those at the "intermediate" level, and to endeavor to treat such threats or attacks in normal law enforcement channels. However, because of the scale of the human, physical, financial or political damage which intermediate terrorism incidents could entail, tactical bargaining with the terrorists -- seeking to bait and trap them while saving the lives of the hostages -- should not be excluded.

The Cabinet Committee/Working Group on April 29 invited each member department and agency to consider whether, in light of the Study Group's report, it should take additional measures within its area of responsibility (a) to help to deter or prevent major terrorist incidents in this country, and (b) to prepare to discharge effectively its perceived role in the management of such an incident if one occurs.

On May 27 the Working Group, meeting at the Assistant Secretary or Deputy Assistant Secretary level:

(a) Considered and took appropriate action on the Study Group's recommendations summarized in subparagraph (d) above;

(b) Approved this Briefing Memorandum for submission to the Chairman of the Cabinet Committee to Combat Terrorism, with the recommendation that he distribute it for the information of all members of the Committee.

Drafted: S/CCT:RAFearey:ijg
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